

Mixed-use development planned at Wyse HQ in N. San Jose

BY BRAD BERTON

The 33-acre headquarters of Wyse Technologies Inc. on San Jose's North First Street corridor is slated to be transformed into a compact modern community mixing residential, retail and recreational uses.

Wyse has opted to sell the complex in favor of a smaller, more modern facility — most likely within the city.

The Wyse complex is along the west side of North First between Tasman Drive and Montague Expressway, stretching west to the Guadalupe

River. The privately held "scalable thin computing solutions" specialist has agreed to sell it to Mill Valley developer Thompson/Dorfman, which aims to redevelop the property into a mixed-use community dubbed Riverview.

After considerable public input and environmental-impact analysis, San Jose planning staffers supported Thompson/Dorfman's proposal for about 1,700 high-density residential units, 45,000 square feet of retail and a 5-acre public park.

District 4 City Councilmember Kansen Chu and Mayor Chuck Reed,

the former District 4 representative, recommended that council approve the redevelopment. The City Council approved the necessary zoning change March 11.

The developer aims to create a pedestrian-friendly mixed-use environment in line with the city's vision for the area's future, says Thompson/Dorfman co-principal Bruce Dorfman.

Dorfman estimates Riverview will cost about \$750 million, and that Thompson/Dorfman expects will start work no later than next spring. Meanwhile the firm and its advisers

will continue designing Riverview's various elements, including the optimal mix and price points of for-sale and rental housing to develop.

ROMA Design Group helped Thompson/Dorfman develop the site plan. Architects KTG Group, SB Architects and Stanley Saitowitz/Natoma Architects also are working on Riverview.

Given that AT&T is leasing the two Wyse buildings fronting North First Street through 2012, Dorfman's firm will start on the western portion of the property. The 455,000-square-foot campus also holds two other buildings, one containing recreation facilities and a cafeteria.

Wyse has operations across the globe, but now employs only about 100 at its longtime world headquarters, according to city documents. Wyse did not respond to the Business Journal's requests for input about its plans. But a Jan. 9 letter from Wyse executive Lumin Chang to Senior Planner John Baty indicates Wyse intends to relocate the headquarters operation within the city.

Private equity firm Garnett & Helfrich Capital in San Mateo acquired a controlling stake in Wyse Technology in 2005. Santa Clara County's current assessment of the company's San Jose acreage, for property tax purposes, is roughly \$60 million. Dorfman declines to disclose what his firm has agreed to pay for the site.

The property's redevelopment plan is the latest of several similar ventures reflecting the Vision North San Jose planning blueprint's emphasis on a denser, pedestrian-oriented mix of land uses, especially along the area's North First spine. Planning officials pressed Thompson/Dorfman to support that vision by siting substantial retail development along the main drag as well as River Oaks Place, the property's southern boundary.

High-density housing is also planned for nearby campus-type properties that have been long-time homes to industrial companies Sony Electronics, Novellus Systems and Cadence Design Systems.

The Wyse property's redevelopment plan seems right up Thompson/Dorfman's alley. Founded in 1999 by Dorfman and Will Thompson, former executives of Irvine Apartment Communities, Thompson/Dorfman specializes in urban infill and mixed-use properties in high-growth, technology-driven markets in the Western U.S.

The developer agreed to incorporate sustainable development practices sufficient to garner a "silver" certification standard under the U.S. Green Building Council's national Leadership in Energy & Environmental Design program.

Thompson/Dorfman also has agreed to study installing automatic external defibrillators in the residential and retail parts of the project. Chu's public policy director, Cary Chien, says the councilmember is a strong supporter of a public defibrillator program and would like to see the life-safety devices installed in high-activity locations across the city.

BRAD BERTON is a freelance writer.

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